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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [PBTS](#) [IZ](#) [AJ](#)

SUBJECT: AZERBAIJANI DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER REVIEWS
BILATERAL SECURITY ISSUES

REF: A. BAKU 01226

[¶](#)B. BAKU 00280

[¶](#)C. STATE 169645

[¶](#)D. STATE 166406

Classified By: Ambassador Anne E. Derse for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary: During a December 28 meeting with the Ambassador, Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov remained noncommittal on a U.S. request to deploy an additional company to Iraq and a provision of a battalion for Afghanistan in the context of a potential TEP offer. Azimov said President Aliyev sought more public signs of support from the U.S. side, referencing a February 2007 letter from former DoD A/S Peter Rodman. Azimov said a potential TEP had to be put in the right political framework, suggesting the program should be linked as closely as possible to Azerbaijan's NATO commitments and to NATO-led PfP operations, as an immediate deployment to Afghanistan of TEP trained troops could put President Aliyev in an "uncomfortable position." Azimov said he told visiting Russian MFA official Anatoly Antonov that the GOAJ does not support the Russian position of ratifying the adapted CFE or at least allowing the adapted CFE to temporarily come into force. Azimov said he would work through the MFA-chaired GOAJ Interagency Working Group on National Security to produce a consolidated response to the U.S. questions on the GOAJ's critical energy infrastructure plans. End Summary.

Coalition Support Requests and TEP

[¶](#)2. (C) The Ambassador asked Azimov for the GOAJ's response to DoD DASD Debra Cagan's request in October 2007 for Azerbaijan to provide an additional company to defend a fixed security site in Iraq in exchange for the U.S. covering all costs, excluding salary, and providing comprehensive training and equipment for the unit (ref A). The Ambassador also asked about the GOAJ's position on a potential Train-and-Equip Program (TEP) offer based on an Azerbaijani commitment to deploy the trained brigade -- one battalion at a time -- to Afghanistan.

[¶](#)3. (C) While noting that he has been tasked to prepare a recommendation on both proposals for the Minister, and saying that "nothing is undoable," Azimov's response was noncommittal. Azimov raised former DoD A/S Peter Rodman's February 2007 letter to President Aliyev, which pledged more U.S. public signs of support for Azerbaijan (ref B). Azimov stated that President Aliyev would like to see "wider and increased public attention from the U.S. on our security cooperation" because the President "wants to be recognized as

a security contributor." Azimov suggested that President Aliyev would need "this type of support" before making a decision on either request.

¶4. (C) Azimov said a potential TEP had to be put in the right political framework, suggesting the program should be linked to Azerbaijani engagement with NATO and to NATO-led PfP operations. Azimov said such a framework could prepare Azerbaijani forces for future deployments, while not requiring an immediate deployment. Azimov said he could recommend the GOAJ participate in a TEP if it is put under a "NATO PfP framework" with a less rigid deployment commitment, but not if it is linked to an immediate ISAF deployment because this could "put Aliyev in an uncomfortable position."

Pressed to explain why, Azimov vaguely suggested that Russian and regional pressures would be the source of this "uncomfortable position." He asked whether the U.S. would be able to consider a TEP based on an Azerbaijani commitment to deploy TEP-trained troops to "NATO peacekeeping operations," which would not be required to immediately deploy to Afghanistan.

¶5. (C) Azimov said that when President Aliyev asked then Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld for a TEP in 2006, President

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Aliyev was not fully aware of all that a TEP involved because Minister of Defense Safar Abiyev did not understand the program well and had not adequately briefed Aliyev. Azimov said Aliyev and Rumsfeld's TEP discussion was one of general consent on the program. Azimov said the GOAJ had considered all the other conditions that a TEP would involve, including the issue of U.S. troops training Azerbaijani soldiers, and they would not be a problem.

Missile Defense

¶6. (C) The Ambassador briefed Azimov on the U.S.-Russian expert-level missile defense discussions in Budapest on December 13. (ref C). Commenting on the U.S. offer of reciprocal stationing of U.S. and Russian personnel at missile defense facilities in one another's country, Azimov said that Russia does not care about gaining access to the Alaska-based missile defense site and instead seeks access to the facilities in the Czech Republic and Poland. In response to Azimov's question about potential stationing of Russian personal at missile defense facilities in the Czech Republic and Poland, the Ambassador clarified that the issue is one of visits -- vice permanent stationing -- and such visits would have to be approved by the governments of Poland and the Czech Republic.

CFE

¶7. (C) Azimov said the December 11 visit of Anatoly Antonov, Director of the Russian MFA's Department of Security and Disarmament, focused on CFE issues. Azimov said Russia wants the adapted CFE to be ratified or at least temporarily come into force. Azimov observed that "I do not think I made them very happy," when he told Antonov that the GOAJ could not support the Russian position on the adapted CFE. Azimov reiterated the GOAJ's standing CFE position that given the current security environment -- namely the ongoing Nagorno Karabakh conflict and Armenia's violation of the treaty -- and the unfair armament ceilings placed on Azerbaijan, the CFE treaty impairs Azerbaijan's security. Azimov stated that the GOAJ links CFE and the NK conflict because CFE impacts Azerbaijan's regional security and the security of individuals living in NK and the occupied territories. Azimov complained that OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair Bernard Fassier seeks to delink these two issues.

CEIP

¶ 8. (C) The Ambassador reviewed the U.S. Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection (CEIP) Interagency Working Group's questions for the GOAJ on its CEIP plans. Azimov agreed that the MFA-chaired GOAJ Interagency Working Group on National Security would seek to produce a consolidated response, while noting there were several other GOAJ bodies working on this issue, including the Ministry of Emergency Situations, which Azimov characterized as "aggressive" on the infrastructure security issues. The Ambassador told Azimov that the questions did not imply any U.S. pledge of assistance, but it is a mechanism for deepening U.S. understanding of the GOAJ's CEIP posture.

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¶ 9. (C) Azimov commented that he is quite engaged on the Basic Principles document, but he complained that French OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair Bernard Fassier is guilty of making last minute language changes. Azimov provided the example of Fassier changing "population" to "inhabitant" in the document, and said with disdain that Fassier should not think such "tricks" would get by him.

Missing AMCIT

¶ 10. (C) The Ambassador raised ref D request for any information regarding missing AMCIT Bob Levinson, who may have been detained by the Iranian intelligence services.

Overflight Rights

¶ 11. (C) The Ambassador asked for Azimov's assistance in speeding up the renewal of the bilateral overflight agreement and reducing the advance notification timeline for U.S. HAZMAT transfers. Azimov pledged to continue working on this issue, explaining that he had phoned several relevant GOAJ agencies the prior day. Azimov explained that the 14-day timeline is in place so that multiple GOAJ agencies can run security checks. This procedure is especially important in checking Russian cargo, according to Azimov. Azimov said that AZAL also is nervous about the volume of available airplane fuel and the volume of airport traffic.

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